



Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 7, 2020 🌀 New Orleans, Louisiana

Minutes

Attendees:

Alan Brackett, LBF Secretary, Mouldoux, Bland, Legrand & Brackett
Hon. Jeffrey Cashe, 21st Judicial District Court
Brandi Cole, Centurylink, Inc.
Christy Kane, Entergy Services, LLC
Sheral Kellar, Assistant Secretary, Office of Workers' Compensation Administration
Greg Landry, Executive Director, Acadiana Legal Services Corp.
Alainna Mire, LSBA President Elect
Senator Beth Mizell, Louisiana State Senate
Luz Molina, Loyola University College of Law
Valerie Schexnayder, LSBA Board of Governors, Mickey S. deLaup, APLC
Sandra Vujnovich, Judicial Administrator, Louisiana Supreme Court

Guests:

Robert Kutcher, 2019-2020 LSBA President, Kutcher Tygier & Luminais, LLP
Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
Adrienne Wheeler, Louisiana Appleseed
Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab
C.C. Kahr, Executive Director, New Orleans Pro Bono Project
Graham Ryan, Jones Walker LLP
Brian Wiggins, Deputy Judicial Administrator, Louisiana Supreme Court
Christine Thomas, LIFT Fellow (LSBA Incubator Program)
Camille Patti, LIFT Fellow (LSBA Incubator Program)
Randall Foreman, Distinguished Pro Bono Fellow with The Pro Bono Project
James Welch, Distinguished Pro Bono Fellow with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Staff:

Amy Duncan, ATJ Training & Project Counsel
Linda Johnson, ATJ Technology Counsel
Joanna Laidler, ATJ Projects Counsel
Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel
Jordan Maier, ATJ Assistant
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Commission and LSBA Board Member Valerie Schexnayder opened the meeting, explaining that Commission co-chair Jeff Coreil was not able to join as he was otherwise engaged in work for the Commission.

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- II. **Consent Calendar** – Items on the consent calendar passed unanimously.
- III. **Louisiana Bar Foundation Report** – LBF Secretary Alan Brackett reminded the Commission that LBF is contracting Spitfire public relations firm to assist in educating the public, the legislature, and the legal community on the importance of civil legal aid; updates on this work will be shared at the next meeting. Additionally, members are invited to the 34th annual Fellows Gala on April 3 at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans.
- IV. **Access to Justice Projects, Issues, & Initiatives**
 - a. **Justice For All Grant** – Amanda Brown reported on progress of the National Center for State Courts-sponsored Justice For All Grant. So far, the team has convened a 12-person advisory committee and is now developing survey instruments to distribute to both legal and nonlegal stakeholders. The surveys will assess the current state of low-income litigants’ access to the legal system. (Commission members are asked to help complete and distribute this survey when they receive it via email.) Additionally, the team is arranging community listening sessions to hear directly from low-income clients. The results from the surveys and the listening sessions will be compiled in April and a strategic plan will then be developed based on the results.
 - b. **Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows** – LSBA President Bob Kutcher introduced the 2020 class of Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows: Former Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) Managing Attorney Jay Welch, who will work with SLLS to establish monthly legal clinics in St. Bernard Parish, and Attorney Randall Foreman, will join the Pro Bono Project to assist in new and ongoing CINC cases. Unable to attend was Loyola Professor María Pabón, who will work with Catholic Charities on immigration issues.
 - c. **IFP Committee Report** – Linda Johnson reported Louisiana State Law Institute (LSLI) member (and ATJ Commission Co-Chair) Jeff Coreil participated in a meeting of that group’s IFP subcommittee last month. Two proposed revisions were introduced to CCP articles 5183 and 5185. Regarding article 5183, it was proposed that the IFP applicant be entitled to reason for denial of their request, either via a hearing or written reason. This would give litigants the opportunity to correct the problem or appeal the decision. Regarding article 5185, it was proposed that the IFP party have the right to receive a certified copy of any judgment or order. These revisions will be presented to the LSLI Civil Procedure subcommittee, and then before the full Law Institute. We hope these two initial revisions will be provided as response to the Commission promoted legislative resolutions and be addressed at the next legislative session.
 - d. **Training** – Amy Duncan welcomed Camille Patti (Camille Patti, Attorney at Law, LLC) and Christine Thomas (The Law Office of Christine D. Thomas, Attorney at Law) to the Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Incubator program. Through a collaboration with the New Orleans Family Justice Center and Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, Camille and Christine will receive office space, mentorship, and resources to increase legal representation to survivors of domestic violence, while building their own solo practices.
 - a. **2020 Pro Bono Awards** – Jordan Maier reminded Commission members of that day’s deadline to submit nominations to the Pro Bono Awards and invited them to the May 5th Pro Bono Awards Ceremony and Reception.

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V. Access to Justice Commission Committee Reports

- a. **Building Bridges** – Adrienne Wheeler reported that the committee has been meeting every two months. The Child Support subcommittee focuses on issues surrounding child support obligations for parents during and post-incarceration. The Provisional Driver’s License committee is working with the Office of Motor Vehicles and DOC to address issues related to obtaining provisional and class E driver’s licenses.
- b. **Funding Committee** – Adrienne Wheeler reported on Louisiana Appleseed’s efforts working with lobbyists Haynie and Associates to secure state funding this year for civil legal aid. We hope to have an appropriation placed in the governor’s budget.

Monte Mollere reported that recently designated LBF Associate Executive Director Laura Sewell is leading a funding initiative to help identify state and federal grants for which legal aid organizations can collaboratively apply. In particular, the group is looking at LAIR (Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable)-type projects, which are federally funded grants to Louisiana state agencies that require a civil legal aid component.

Finally, Monte Mollere reported that members of the funding committee are exploring the expansion of filing fees as an additional source of funding. While many states mandate a filing fee for civil legal aid, under RS 13:1000, Louisiana courts individually elect whether or not to charge up to \$10 in a legal aid fee.

- c. **Modest Means** – Amy Duncan reported that 69 attorneys are listed on the Directory, just one away from meeting the goal of the strategic plan for 2019-2020. The Directory is still seeing a rise in demand for services in Terrebonne parish and the Committee is seeking to recruit local attorneys to meet that need. As part of their recruitment campaign, the Committee sent packets with a letter from LSBA President Bob Kutcher and information about the Modest Means Directory to the leadership of 66 local and specialty bar associations. The Committee will host a follow-up CLE on March 26, 2020 for attorneys who are members of the Directory or who are interested in joining the Directory.

Finally, following the research done by George Washington Law students, the Committee will put together a limited scope representation toolkit to guide attorneys on how to ethically provide LSR in Louisiana.

- d. **Language Access Committee** – Brian Wiggins, Deputy Judicial Administrator and Language Access Coordinator at the Louisiana Supreme Court, reported that the Louisiana Supreme Court stakeholder committee will implement their language access plan; the Commission committee will act in an advisory capacity to assist with research and strategy.
- e. **SRL Committee** – The SRL Committee hosted a Service Provider Summit at the Jackson Barracks on January 31. Approximately 61 people attended, including judges, clerks of court, JAG officers, and legal aid partners. The summit informed attendees of resources, technology, and statewide services available to assist SRLs with accessing the legal system. Links to these resources will be shared after the meeting.

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The SRL Committee and the Commission at large also offer a heartfelt goodbye to Joanna Laidler, who is returning to her native Australia in March 2020. Joanna has been instrumental in the work of the SRL Committee, among other projects, and will be dearly missed.

- f. Technology Committee** – The Committee continues to look at possible applications of new technology in the Louisiana legal field, such as online portals, online dispute resolution, etc., especially considering the framework of the JFA grant.
- g. ATJ Grant Fund** – Monte reminded the Commission that applications for the ATJ Grant Fund are being accepted through February 28. The grant administers up to \$50,000 in funds to 501(c)(3) initiatives focusing on the advancement and maintenance of statewide technology, the coordination of statewide intake and referral, or disaster/emergency response. Interested nonprofit organizations should email Monte Mollere at mmollere@lsba.org expressing their interest and intended project.
- h. SLLS Hammond Open House** – Laura Tuggle invited Commission members to attend Southeast Louisiana Legal Services’ open house celebrating the opening of their new office at 200 Guidry Drive, Hammond, LA. Commission member Senator Mizell will be recognized at the event with a Champion of Justice Award for her leadership in promoting state funding of civil legal aid.

VI. Adjourn

- a.** Next meeting: May 15 at Baton Rouge Bar Association